524 imitation of the webbed feet of a fowl. Done in quick tempo it becomes an acrobatic or a dancer's feat to sitters on chairs, but Burmans do it easily. We broke up into two teams and put out a prize cock in turn. The two cocks face each other and shuffle out their legs slowly to the rhythm of the accompanying verse: a slow and measured beat at first, then a sudden quickening with the acceleration of the rhythm, until at the crow given by the teams both go all out, quicker and quicker until one is exhaused and falls out vanquished. This is what we sang in chorus:

Kyet Hpa ta nyin	Two cocks, a fine pair
Taw go win	Walk in the forest dare
Maung Yin la, hay hnin pyit.	Comes Maung Yin and shoots with bow.
Ma pyit ba hnin,	O Maung Yin, don't shoot so,
Maung Yin yè	Styes will on your eyelids
Kyet-tet su tat tè.	grow.*
Bè beka su su	On the left eye, one two!
Nya beko su su	On the right eye, one two!
Khut laik gya so thu-ngè-gyin!	Come my friend then let us fight it!
Aw-ee-ee-aw!	Cock-a-doodle doo!
Nga do kyet hpa naing naing	Our cock will win it, win it!
Thu do kyet hpa shon shon.	Their cock will finish, finish!

Some of the games included forfeits, but the forfeits were of a broad comicality, dragging the victim by the ear, or if it happened to be one of the younger servants, rubbing soot on his face. Robbing stones from under the care of a guardian keeping watch over them within a circle was stealing the eggs from a mother tortoise; the postless figure in General Post was a *khway-yu*, mad dog; blind man's buff was *bok-ta-lon tauktè*, a tucktoo with a buff.

776 We spent a lot of time with A-Kyi and the men about the house.
857 It was they who filled our world with bogies and spirits who were no less real to them than they were to us. We were warned not to be too greedy, or we would turn into *peik-tas* in the next existence, great tall spirits with voracious appetites and mouths the size of a needle's eye, or others with mouths like yawning caverns wide enough to swallow a pig, but no stomachs to receive the food. We were told that miserly and avaricious people would never be parted from their possessions which would follow them into their next existence, when they would be *ok-ta-sauk*, pictured for us as assuming the guise of fair girls with thanakha on their

[753] *There is a belief that styes are retribution for the killing of a cock.

757 given to us in saucers, my mother invoking the Triple Gems while blowing on it and coaxing us to drink it as the medicine of the Three Gems: "*Paya-say, taya-say, thanga-say,*" she would say: "Physic of the Buddha, of the Law, of the Clergy." After this came two saucersful of hot water in which betel leaves had been boiled, to raise a sweat; my mother would cover us with an ok-saung, my father would come in on tiptoe to look at us very often, even when our temperatures were nearly normal, and the fever would leave us quite soon.

Our purgative was *dat-le-ba-say*, physic of the four elements; it was a glutinous paste of senna for purging, tamarind as acid and purgative, jaggery to soothe, liquorice to taste, and salt. It was nasty. My mother rolled about a golf ball size of the stuff into little balls which we were expected to swallow. But she was very firm that there must always be an odd number of balls, because Burmese people believe that odd numbers are more auspicious, like the *Three* Gems, the *Nine* Nawaya; when the shinbyu ceremony for the initiation of boys into the priesthood is carried out, or the ears of the girls bored ceremonially, it is inauspicious to "do" an even number of children. So if my mother's golf ball of the purgative made eight balls, she would always pinch more stuff out of the jar and make nine, and, as I grew older and more sceptical, both my stomach and my mood would react on each other and I generally got stuck at the sixth or eighth, much to my mother's dismay. But to this day I believe in the efficacy of these particular medicines for my own system.

753 787 When any of us kept ailing over a long period it was felt that our astronomical prospects were low, and the *bedin-saya*, vulgarly translated as fortune-teller, was called in. He was regarded as an astrologer. My mother brought out our horoscopes which had been cast by a brahmin when we were a few years old. These horoscopes, inscribed on a palm leaf doubled up and sewn tightly together, were precious objects kept at the head of my father's bed. The exact day and hour of the birth of the child, the auspicious name given according to this time and day, the astronomical bodies exerting influence over such a birth, and a table to show the heavenly influences which would prevail during the successive periods of the child's life so that future calculations could be made, were all inscribed finely on this neat yellow leaf. The bedin-saya made calculations now to see if our *kan* (fate, luck) was high or low; if low, he prescribed some counteracting influences. I was once given a chicken as a *khamè*, a charm which would keep the evil influences at bay, and the servants fed the chicken for me until I had recovered. Sometimes it is certain foods which bring the evil influences, and the proscribing of them even during good health was more annoying. One of my sisters, treated thus as a child, complained that the bedin-saya was a tiresome

old man with rhetorical leanings and included things because they formed a nice rhyme, and, indeed, she was not far from the truth. Our monosyllabic language is a heavenly gift to us with its endless scope for the most unrestrained punning and rhyming; the pun in Burmese is not execrable humour but a stepping stone for flights of fancy. What my sister was not allowed to eat were the three most precious foods as proverbialised in: *a-thi-hma tha-yet; a-yuet hma la-hpet; a-tha hma wet*: among fruits the *tha-yet*, among leaves the *la-hpet*, among flesh the *wet*: *tha-yet, la-hpet* and *wet* being the mango, the pickled tea-leaf and the pig's flesh respectively, and open to question as being really the prime specimens of their class, but certainly rhyming happily.

My parents were so good to us; they never scolded, beat or punished us that I can remember. Perhaps they had both had so much discipline in their own youths; I can remember the day we were told to answer them "Father" and "Mother" when they called us, instead of *Paya* as we had done formerly. Paya is the term of extreme respect and humility, sometimes adopted by children to parents, always by servants to their superiors, by subordinates to senior officials, and by all to royalty and the clergy. It is also the suffix to honorific titles. Its true and ancient use had associations of reverence only, but it has taken on a more subservient hue with the advent of government and foreign officials.

But whether we answered Paya or Father, my mother's guiding influence led us to look on my father with awe, even though he was the parent who clowned with us at home. We were always bathed and dressed before he came home, waiting for him. As soon as he entered the gate we raced down the drive to carry his umbrella, took him upstairs and scrambled to take his shoes off as soon as we could get him seated. His shoes, suspenders and socks were removed by combined efforts, my father pretending great helplessness all the while. We went for walks while my parents went to play tennis, but returned in time to carry their racquets upstairs and remove my father's shoes again. After dinner my mother and we lay on mats while my father sat in an easy chair and pretended to get his nursery rhymes all wrong, until we taught him:

A-hpo gyi oh, hka kon kon,	Old man so bent and grey,
Ma thay ba hnin oh	Do not die as yet we pray.
Naung hnit-hka ta-saung-mon	Till next December try to tarry
Pwè kyi ba oh.	And watch the actors play and marry.

Or the voracious cat who ate everything:

Kyaung-gyi pè ti mi tan to	Oh you big and short tailed cat.
A-hni ko sa ba lo	Swallowing the lean
A-hka ko sayo.	And eating the fat.

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and little morsels of food. Often, if the village is larger, the shrine is much more pretentious, assuming almost the size and appearance of a zayat, a large tectum or roof, gabled and supported with red posts, the platform ornamented, and with a dais at one end, on which a representation of the nat is placed at the feast time, which, in imitation of the pagoda festivals, occurs at a regular fixed season. At other times these images are kept stowed away in an adjoining chamber, built for the purpose. It is particularly irritating to an educated Burman to see these absurd figures, which remind one of nothing so much as the fetiches of the prognathous African. Two gaudily dressed puppets, masquerading with spire-like crown, and royal, sharp-pointed swords, represent the much-feared nats, Shwe Pyin-gyi and Shwe Pyin-ngè, the Nyi-daw, Naung-daw, the Royal Younger Brother and the Royal Elder Brother, who command much respect in the neighbourhood of Mandalay and in Upper Burma generally. A still more dreaded spirit is one whose representation figures in a shrine at Tagaung, one of the ancient capitals of the country, half-way between Mandalay and Bhamaw. He appears simply as a head on a post, four feet high or thereabouts. A spire-like crown rests on his head, his eyes protrude and goggle in semi-globular wrath, asinine ears and a Punch-like nose complete the likeness, for he has no mouth, and his body is that of a dragon. Every one avoids his temple as much as possible, but the inhabitants of the village bow in that direction before they venture to do anything, and passing boatmen kindle lamps and offer flowers, of which he is said to be particularly fond, and fruit, for the
● [753] nat has an incorrigible habit of giving people the stomach-ache when he is offended, and death punishes the recalcitrant. "Tagaung colic" is a recognised ailment with the Burmese faculty. The demon is said to have been one of the ancient kings of the place, who acquired his power from magical arts which he learned in Northern India. Three famous pagodas in the defile take their names from episodes in his life; and
[173] his two sons founded the dynasty of Prome. Oftenest of all, however, the nat-shrine contains no figure. It is occupied only by the viewless spirits of the air.

First in the list of personal spirits may be considered the

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obtained. Red and yellow are, however, always the predominating colours. 531 285 322

The thi'si is turned to a variety of other uses besides the manufacture of lacquer-work; applied to wood, or to marble and clay images, it enables them readily to take on gilding. It is used as a waterproof varnish to all the umbrellas in the country, and makes them as impervious to rain as if they were made of wood, while it protects the palm-leaf against the rays of the sun, which otherwise would burn it as brittle as an egg-shell. All the racing and war-boats in Burma are painted with it, and the best caulking in the world could not make them more water-tight. Finally, boiled down thick it furnishes the material for delineating the square heavy characters of the sacred kammawa-sa, the ritual for the admission of brethren to the sacred order. 531 249

The oil is usually put in the sun for a short time before being used, and it is at first of a light brown colour, soon darkening into a brilliant black. It seems to be of a particularly mordant character, and raises huge blisters on the hands of some people, leaving marks of the ashy-white colour suggestive of leprosy. Hence strangers suspected of [753] being afflicted with the terrible malady always declare they are thi'si workers; and many people avoid these latter, in case they might find they had been holding communication with an outcast. A lotion composed of fine teak-wood saw-dust, mixed with a little water, is used as a cure for blains. [757] Many of the workmen periodically swallow small doses of the wood-oil, under the impression that it acts as a preventive. The capriciousness with which the varnish acts, leaving some men quite unharmed and punishing others severely, has given rise to a proverb in Nyaung-u:—

Thi'si is a witness
To a burgher's fitness;
If bad, he's marked an outcast;
If good, not long can doubt last.

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774 827 blood is feverish or excited in any way, the butterfly necessarily becomes restless, and wanders about more or less rapidly and into more or less strange places, according to the degree of perturbation. Therefore it happens that the soul thus existing in itself, and straying or flying at random, sees extremely strange and fantastic visions on these voyages. An elaboration of this notion divides dreams into three special varieties: those which occur at the beginning of sleep, those about midnight, and those in the early morning; or the false, the mixed, and the true. Bedin-sayās and wise women are for this reason always very particular in their inquiries as to the precise time at which the dream occurred. If they foretell wrongly it is, of course, because the questionist made a mistake as to the time when his vision appeared to him.

774 776 These night wanderings of the butterfly spirit are not without their dangers. In addition to other hobgoblins and spectres, Burma is especially plagued by evil spirits called bilus—creatures in human guise who devour men. If they will eat the corporate man, there is small doubt what will happen to the fragile butterfly spirit should it come across such an ogre. Cases do happen when the leip-bya is gulped down, and then the man has slept his last sleep. More often, however, it is only a case of leip-bya lan; the soul is scared, and in its terror sometimes runs into unknown regions, from which it is unable to retrace its steps, when of course it dies and with it the owner; or it rushes home to its bodily dwelling-place with such precipitation that the whole system is disorganised and sickness follows. This butterfly theory, 753 757 therefore, offers a grand field for quack doctors, of whom there are unfortunately a very large number in Burma. When a man falls ill they dose him with all the drugs and simples they have in their little bamboo phials. If he does not get better after taking even the fungus from the roots of the bamboo, culled in the eclipse, or vegetable soot prepared at the change of the moon, then there can be only one opinion; the leip-bya has had its system shaken by some ghoulish sight; or perhaps it is being kept in durance vile by some tasé, some demon (in the sense of the Greek δαίμων), or by a sôn, a wizard. In this case no bodily medicine can be of any use, were it even that celebrated

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nostrum, the green powder, which contains 160 different ingredients. A witch doctor must be called in, and he resorts to the leip-bya hkaw. This ceremony is very much like that made use of in ordinary cases of oppression by evil genii, nat-sos, and witches. Offerings are laid outside the house, or perhaps outside the village, at night—heaps of cooked rice, bananas, salt fish, and other eatables; and the malevolent being, whether ghostly tasé or material witch, is begged to eat this rice instead of the butterfly spirit, and to let the prisoner free. Few are hardy enough to watch and see what happens; but the few who have done so agree in the discovery that the demon appears in the shape of a pariah dog, which does not differ from other pariah dogs in spirit, inasmuch as it will run away if you throw stones at it. The offerings are repeated till a change takes place. Perhaps the tasé is greedy, eats offerings, leip-bya, and all, and kills the man. Perhaps it is appeased. Then the butterfly spirit returns safe to its owner again, and convalescence sets in. This is called leip-bya win. Bilus are never successfully negotiated with in this way; they are too voracious. They occasionally appear in broad daylight upon earth; but may always be recognised, since they have red eyes and cast no shadow.

774

A particularly difficult operation is to separate two leip-byas that were intimately united in life. This is especially the case when a mother has died leaving a little infant. If the leip-bya kwè is not resorted to, the butterfly of the little one will follow the mother, and the child will die. A wise woman is therefore called in. She murmurs some mantras, and then places a looking-glass on the floor near the corpse. Still muttering, but with more and more rapid gesticulation, she drops a filmy shred of cotton down on the face of the mirror, and with frenzied words entreats the dead mother not to retain the infant soul, but let it come back to its earthly tenement. The fleecy down slowly slips down the mirror face and falls off into the handkerchief she holds below, and is then gently placed on the breast of the child. A similar ceremony is occasionally gone through when a husband or wife is more than usually overcome by the death of the yoke-fellow.

The whole notion is of course foreign to Buddhism, and

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CHAPTER XLI

CHOLERA SPECIFICS

● 753 755 OCCASIONALLY a whole Burmese village or a quarter of the town seems to be seized with sudden madness. Without a moment's warning, apparently, and moved by one common impulse, the able-bodied scramble on to the tops of their houses and fall to work to beat the wooden or mat roofs with bamboos and billets of wood. The old and feeble stand down below and thump unmelodious drums, or bray their loudest on raucous trumpets, while the women and children dance round about and open their mouths and yell. No one has any right to talk about pandemonium till he has been scared by the sudden bursting on the night air of this diabolical uproar. New-comers in Rangoon, mindful of the scares which have been frequent of late years, on hearing the outburst for the first time, are apt to believe that the long-prophesied rising of the "budmash" population has at length commenced, and that the ferocious Burman has started on the war-path. They are the more inclined to believe it because the outbreak always takes place at night, and, at a distance, suggests nothing so much as a general free fight. But it is nothing of the kind; nothing could be farther from it. It is, in point of fact, the regular sequel to a religious ceremony. Cholera has appeared in the district. There have been a number of deaths, and the population is aroused to a sense of the danger. The terrible epidemic is of annual occurrence, notwithstanding all sanitary precautions, at the beginning of the south-west monsoon in May. The first heavy bursts of the rainy season wash all manner of surface impurities, animal and vegetable, into the wells

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and tanks, and cases of sporadic cholera are the consequence. So says the civil surgeon; but the Burmans do not believe him. They are convinced that a nat-so, some evil spirit, has taken up his abode in the place, and is exacting revenge for some real or fancied insult. They accordingly take this means of forcing him to quit; and if the malignant nat can be supposed to have any nerves whatever, it certainly ought to be effective.

The brethren of the monastery discountenance the practice as far as they can—as indeed every one not afflicted with a dulness of hearing might be expected to do. It is a remnant of the old geniolatry, and, having nothing to do with pure Buddhism, confounds the dewas of the six heavens with the heathenish spirits of the old wild tribes. But cholera is a pestilence that regards not the yellow robe of the mendicant any more than the gay paso of the frivolous; and so the pôngyis hold the ceremony which immediately precedes the wild riot called thayè tôpthi, and display their opposition no more violently than by getting out of the way as fast as the dignified walk prescribed to the Assembly of the Perfect permits.

It is related that long ago, at the time of the beginning of religion, the terrible pestilence swept over Kapilawut, the city of Thudawdana, the father of the Lord Buddha. Only at the intercession and by the merits of the prayers and good works of the saviour of the world and his assembly, was the plague stayed, and the city saved from desolation—hence the function called pareit yôtthi. Cholera has broken out in the village. Several deaths have occurred in succession with the terrible suddenness which is characteristic of the disease. The dirges played by the bands for the dead fade into one another and break out all down the street. Then one of the chief men of the place makes preparations and begs the monks to come down from the monastery. A raised dais is put up at the back of the room for the accommodation of the yahans, and covered with mats. Offerings to the holy men are arranged in a long row before the platform—rice, fruit, flowers, betel-boxes, pillows, cups and bowls. Alongside of these are placed the vessels which the monastic superior is to consecrate—nyaung ye-o, sacred to the use of

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757 of the falling of a thunderbolt and finds meteoric stones, has sufficient to set him up as a doctor at once. The scrapings of the stone, among other things, are the best possible ophthalmic medicine. Liquids are very seldom used. There are, however, two schools—the datsayās, or dietists, who trust solely to regulating the patient's food according to the derangement of the elements, which is supposed to cause his disease, and eschew drugs; and the beindawsayās, who rely upon the exhibition of medicines. These last, the druggists, are far more numerous than the dietists. It is a great deal more easy to get a reputation with potent drugs than with a simple regulation of the diet, and accordingly an upstart doctor is always a druggist. The best advisers are those who combine the two systems, but such sensible practitioners are unfortunately few and far between.

822 826 ●753 Both assert that the human body is composed of four dat, or elements. These are—patawi daht, earth; apaw dat, water; tezaw dat, fire; wayaw dat, air. Akatha, or ether, is sometimes added to these, but the doctors mostly disregard it. Earth constitutes the flesh, bones, hair, intestines, and the like members of a man. Water constitutes the fat, blood, bile, spittle, mucus, etc. Eating, drinking, chewing, and licking come from the fire element. Air produces the six kinds of winds. Any derangement of the equilibrium of these elements makes a man ill, and it is important to know the precise time of a man's birth in order to know in what proportion the dat should be present. 753 Therefore in the case of illness an experienced doctor almost always examines a man's birth certificate before he looks at the sick man himself. Besides the derangement of the elements, diseases may be caused by kan, the influence of the sum of good and bad actions a man has done in past existences. If a man is ill of kan, nothing will cure him but the preponderance of good in his past lives. Again, a man may fall sick through derangement of his seit, or mind; through the influence of the seasons, utu; or, lastly, through food, ahāya. These causes, being laid down as the basis of the diagnosis, naturally do not always lead to the best results in the case of affections which are in any way out of the common run. Even in perfectly evident illnesses, however,

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such as low fever, two persons in the same house afflicted in the same degree with the same ailment, are treated differently, simply because they were born under the influence of different planets, which have a special control over the effects of utu and ahāya, or over the respective relations of fire and water.

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The dietists are often particularly absurd in their regulation of the diet from the horoscope. Having ascertained the day on which the patient was born, they will forbid him to eat articles of food whose names commence with any of the letters assigned to that particular day, most especially those which have the same initial letter as the sick man has himself. Thus a man born on Sunday will have to eschew eggs (u), cocoanuts (ônthi), and other edibles whose name commences with a vowel. One whose birthday is Thursday must give up pumpkins (payônthi), mangosteens, and gourds (buthi), while a Monday's child must refrain from seasoning his curry with ginger (kyinsein) or garlic (kyetthônbyu), and so on through all the other days. It is worthy of note, however, that those born on a Saturday are never forbidden to eat their rice (tamin), nor those on Friday their curry (hin). An attempt to ostracise the staff of life, as curry and rice is to all Orientals, would only result in bad treatment to the too pedantic and precisely logical practitioner. Such affections are called "Monday's sickness," "Tuesday's sickness," and so on. (Taninla, Inga kan kaitthi.)

These vagaries of the dietists are, however, far from universal, and emanate mostly from the manifest quacks of the profession, just as newly-set-up druggists will imagine specially curative properties in every strange and new leaf, or seed, or mineral they come across, and manufacture such extraordinary compounds as the green powder nostrum, which was exhibited to an astonished English M.D. with the information that it contained one hundred and sixty different ingredients and was infallible in its results. No doubt it was.

There is no denying that the excitability and impatience of the people react on the proceedings of the Burmese doctors. Whenever a man falls sick he gets into a feverish state of alarm about himself, and probably sends off for

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789 831 Knowledge of this latter particular is imperative, and an error of an hour or two makes all the difference in the composition of the potion.

757 It ought to be unsatisfactory to an intelligent Burman's feelings to think that the man who prescribes for him in a dangerous illness is possibly at the same time mixing cunning draughts for a love-sick maid, or is manufacturing an image of a girl with magical charms and drugs which shall drive the original mad and soothe the vengeful wrath of the rejected suitor. Perhaps it is on this account that a Rangoon Burman, if he falls ill out in the district anywhere, hurries back to town as fast as he can. If he cannot do that, the best thing is to call in a wéza in preference to an unknown doctor; for while the former will probably confine himself to incantations at first, the dietist will irritate all the gastric juices in your body by prescribing some new variety of food, and banning everything you have been accustomed to; while the druggist will cram you to the throat with cathartics and anthelmintics, with arsenic, fungi from bamboo roots, green vitriol, decoctions of lemon grass, borax, croton seeds, and vegetable soot.

● 753 The father of Burmese medical science was the celebrated physician Zewaka, who once cured a colic which afflicted the Lord Buddha Gautama, by simply giving him three flowers to smell. Upon the petals were strewn some potent powders which restored perfect health in a few hours. To this good medico is to be ascribed the assertion that the diseases which afflict mankind are ninety-six in number. These may vary in their symptoms according to the thirty-five temperaments, the forty-five accidents, the sixteen dangers, and the four elements, but there are no more than ninety-six wedana for all that. Accordingly, a very common beginning to a [576] formal Burmese letter is to say that by his correspondent's good wishes the writer has been preserved from the ninety-six andayè; the thirty-two kan-chammā, or pieces of bad luck; the twenty-five baya, dangers from assassins, wild beasts, and the like; and finally from aneitta bala, evils of all kinds, envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness: his friend's regard has kept all these things far from him, may the writer's good will be not less efficacious. Therefore it is

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very essential that even the most empirical doctor should know at least the names of these diseases. The mere sound of them is as good as medicine to a man with a stomach-ache.

Bewitchings, of course, do not count as diseases. Very often when a man has very strong griping pains which no amount of drugs will serve to alleviate, the doctor declares that there is an a-pin in him. Some wizard has introduced a piece of raw flesh into his stomach by means of a spell, and this goes on drawing everything to it till it kills the man. When a sick man is unable to pronounce certain letters the doctors are able to calculate in how many days or hours he will die. It is not wise to dispute this. The fulfilment of their prophecies lies very completely in their hands.

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Very often images of pagodas and Buddhas may be seen outside a house in the country villages. There is some one sick within, and the pious resort to this expedient to get rid of the malady. This method is called payā tayā, and does not exclude medical advice. The figures are small, and are usually made of pasteboard or clay. A man afflicted with a headache will often hang up pictures of peacocks and hares under his eaves, along with small fans. The peacock represents the sun and the hare the moon, and the indisposition is supposed to result from sun or moonstroke. Sometimes a sayā, when he is called in, will recommend that the patient be moved a little to the eastward or the westward, if his illness arises from kan. Similar to this is the ceremony called yedaya yayi or yedaya sin. A small coffin with a tiny corpse inside it is manufactured and carried a small distance to the east or the west and there buried. When the ayôp, the effigy of the patient, has been thus disposed of, he ought to get well. These matters are decided from the sick man's horoscope, which shows from what constellations he is particularly likely to suffer harm.

The witch doctor usually has an elaborate rod called ywatan, marked all over with cabalistic figures, and often with medicines let into it. The sayā stands before the possessed person and threatens a blow. The witch or spirit in the victim then becomes anxious and pays reverence with clasped hands. It is then forced to relate exactly its name

HEALTH
Disorders.

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U Myaing and Ma Aye Myaing were each approached individually by Ko Sein Tu (U Myaing) with Ko Nya Tu and Ma Khin Hmway (Ma Aye Myaing), for a history of the disorders of their family. This data is presented below directly as it has been received from the informants. The disorder is identified by its Burmese name and presumed English name, along with a description and period and place of affliction. This is followed by an account of the treatment.

Small-pox; KYAUK. U Myaing informs us that his two elder daughters had the small pox in 1942. Both were stricken at the same time, and recovered after 15 days. His two younger daughters were vaccinated. In describing this disorder, U Myaing says:

"At first the person is stricken with fever. At the end of the third day, small pustules appear on the body. When these ripen they are pricked and burst. Some Burmese practioners come and collect this pus for use as vaccine. Two or three days after GWAY DAUNG root, guava fruit and saffron are mixed and applied the pustules subside and the skin falls off. When the pustules started coming out, they were dark coloured, but when the patient is cured, the skin in those places becomes red. The small pox which the children had was not very severe. The whole course of treatment is carried out with Burmese medicines and by Burmese practioners. Soup of PE-LUN leaves is given to the patient. All sour and sweet foods are avoided when the rashes appear. When the pustules burst, guava fruit, saffron and Gway Daung root are made into a cream by rubbing on the rough surface of a KYAUK PYIN stone slab. The sores heal. The patient then has to bathe for three days in water which has boiled together with leaves of the NEEM tree. No charge was made for the medicines, and no expenses were incurred other than Practioner's fee of Rs. 5/-."

Malaria; HNGET HPYA (bird fever). U Myaing was stricken with malaria during 1942 for about 8 months. According to his description, in malaria, the patient goes down with high fever. The temperature rises and he begins to feel very warm. Then all at once he begins to feel very warm. Then all at once he begins to feel cold, and then colder and colder and starts shivering. In this condition three or four people are needed to hold him down. About four or five hours after feeling very cold he begins to grow hot again and his temperature falls when enough sweat has left the patients body. The next day, at the same time the temperature rises again. This sickness has to be cured with quinine. The Burmese cure for malaria seems to be mainly through dieting. Sour foods were eschewed, Neem leaves were eaten, and also NGA YAN fish was cooked with oil and eaten. The total expenditure for the cure amounted to Rs. 140/- or Rs. 150/- - if time lost for work is also included, Rs. 400/-.

Chicken pox; PE THI BAR: Every one in the family has had chicken pox at some time or the other. These were all in Pantanaw and lasted for about one month each. In this affliction the skin reddens, pus accumulates, and sores break out. These come out like the small pox and last for about a month. There is no internal suffering. Burmese practioners make the patient bathe frequently in cream made of guava fruit and saffron is applied.

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Measles: MET THET (Pig dropping): This is another disorder that has visited every member of the family at one time or another. This was in Pantanaw and lasted for about a month each. In measles, according to U Myaing, the skins reddens and pustules appear. These last for about 45 days and disappear when ashes of burnt pig dropping are administered in water to the patient. Plum Jam (Zee Yo) is also made and given to the patient to eat. Costs for ingredients of cure cost Rs. 14/- or Rs. 15/-.

Dysentery: MIN KAIK: U Myaing informs us that he had dysentery once at the age of thirty. It was a mild attack, lasting for about four or five days, and involving no mucus and no blood. It was cured by eating garlic and jaggery fried in oil, costing Rs. 4/- or Rs. 5/- to make. This was in Pantanaw.

Urticaria: GYAIK THO: U Myaing and his two elder daughters have had urticaria; U Myaing when at the age of 24 and his daughters about 5 years ago. In Urticaria, U Myaing says, itchy swellings develop all over the body, which subside and are cured within two days if the right medicines are applied. Treatment is either through taking ashes of burnt IN leaves administered in water, or by gently pounding the patient seven times with a pounder used for husking rice, the patient holding his breath the while. This treatment cost nothing.

Abscess: THET-TANT: U Myaing has been affected by THET TANT once in his life, about four years ago and for a period of 18 days. In this disorder, a painful swelling develops on the back of the shoulder. There is no open sore. The patient begins to cough. When he begins to cough the Burmese practioner is called in. He uses his own medicine of which all U Myaing saw was a piece of garlic. With this he makes movements of dressing the swelling from the shoulder to the thumb, seven times in all. Then he tells the patient that within eight hours (in U Myaing's case from 12 o'clock to 8 o'clock) the swelling will have removed to the thumb. Within eight hours the pain is no longer located on the shoulder, and the swelling now appears on the thumb. This is now allowed to ripen and the accumulated pus is cleaned out. Antiseptic HPAN YE is used on the sore. The practioner charges Rs. 10/- as fees, and supplies his own medicine without further charge. This was in Pantanaw when U Myaing was a patient. The following account of the treatment of this disorder by U Myaing himself is given below,

> "About the disease THET TANT. I do not know how to recite the incantations used in the cure. In this disease a hot, painful and hard swelling appears. The other people came to call me (when a person in the refugee camp was afflicted with a similar ailment) because they thought it was THET TANT. As I had THET TANT once in my life I happen to know the cure for it. I managed to bring down swelling from the shoulder to the thumb. Within two or three hours of treatment the painful swelling from the shoulder to the thumb. Within two or three hours of treatment the painful swelling in the shoulder subsided and the thumb began to ache. The next morning, when the bandage was removed from the thumb pus was found to have accumulated there. When the pustule burst, it was treated as an ordinary open sore. In this disease, a swelling on the shoulder can be moved to the thumb and on the lower trunk or lower extremities to the big toe. The swelling is hard and elongated, and if not recognised and treated early starts to spread. This swelling never appears on the head or face. In the refugee camp there is one person by the name of Ma Saw Hla who had this disease during childhood, when she was about three years old. It was treated too late, and as a result she now walks with a limp."

U Myaing at this juncture sent for Ma Saw Hla and made her walk up and down in front of us to let us see her limping gait. He also made her give some information on her case. Ma Saw Hla said:

"I went down with this disease. A young practioner from Tavoy came and tried massage, but only made it worse. I had

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to go to the hospital (Pantanaw). When we met a Karen friend, he smeared some saffron onto the affected part, and recited something and at once two long lines appeared and it became apparent that the disease was THET TANT. (THET TANT, it is said is of two kinds, male and female, and this person had both. The difference between the two kinds seem to lie in the size of the swellings, the male being larger and more virulent.) The docter in the hospital had to i operate on me. He told my parents that if I did not undergo any operation I would surely die, and even if it was successful it would affect a nerve and I would be left with a limp all my life. My parents had him operate and I was cured, but I've had this limp ever since. It was three months from inception before we knew that it was THET TANT."

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When U Myaing cured his patient in Pantanaw, he lighted three or four candles and an incense burner; he recited prayers and the 5 Silas. At the head of the bed he placed the bowl containing water scented with Kalamet cream, Taung-Dan-Gyi cream and perfumes. Then U Myaing took this and began to sprinkle the water about the room, wishing aloud for the patient's recovery. Then he took seven single buds of garlic, weighing about 5 ticals and ground them together, and bandaged them around the thumb. U Myaing continues his account:

"I don't know the recitations for this desease. But what they do is to mix lime and saffron in water and smear it it on the affected part. Some people drink this. This is one method. Using garlic is another method. When the part is smeared with this mixture, the disease comes to the surface. There are some people who have died because the sore burst inside the body. As regards the garlic cure, when I enquired carefully, it turned out that the stanzas recited had nothing to do with effecting the cure. It must have been due to the garlic, because I could cure another person without reciting the stanzas. There are three kinds of THET TANT: the three months kind, the six months kind and the three years kind. It seems as if there is an internal swelling and it rises to the surface and disappears rises again, and so on. When there is a swelling and it is very hot, then it can be diagnosed as THET TANT. When it is is treated, the patient collapses with fever for one night - the night when the swelling is moved to the throb. This disease is not very rare. I have seen it five or six times. There have been cases like that of Ko Maung Thant in Pantanaw, where the patient has died of internal THET TANT without knowing the nature of his disease. Only when the person is about to die does the internal THET TANT come to the surface. The swelling is hot, but there are also some cases where it is not so.

"The patient who I treated a few days ago in camp is now better. There are various ways and means of treating this disease. Some do it with bananas. After I burst the pustule and squeeze out the pus, I do not put any medicine on the sore. The reason why it cannot be treated on the shoulder is that there is no pus - only an inflamed swelling which is very painful. Some practioners who do not know how to move the swelling smear on the shoulder certain mixtures which are designed to bring out the pus to the surface, and they cure the sore on the shoulder itself.

"I did not take any fee for curing the young boy in Pantanaw. He was very poor and I asked them only to buy the garlic for themselves. This was about 6 years ago, and the patient was about 16 years of age. He was in such a bad condition shouting and yelling in pain, that the parents expected him to die, and were weeping. I realized that whether my treatment proved efficacious or not, it could not make his condition any worse than it was, and so I

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started treatment. The day I started treatment the swelling reached his thumb, and four or five days later it burst. The thumb was placed in antiseptic HPAN YE liquid and smeared with crude petroleum oil and ashes. The name of the boy was Maung Hla Yin of Pathee village. I do not know whether or not they called in practicners. No one came to call me either. I heard of his sickness and went over. He had been suffering for about twenty days before I started to treat him. Not being a practicner, I do not know how to cure other diseases. I know how to cure this disease because it happened to me once and I witnessed the treatment.

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"Some practicners cure the disease in another way - through saffron and white lime. They also have a wooden DAH fashioned out of the wood from a tree which has been struck by lighting. With this DAH they strike at the swelling lightly after which they smear the mixture on. I have no knowledge of where these practicners learn their trade. Burmese cures must be cheap and efficacious. It seems to me that recitations etc. are made to enable the practicner to command a higher fee, since people can and have been cured without any recitations at all. I do not believe in their incantations."

Scabies: MEH (itch). During the Japanese regime, the youngest child had scabies when she was one year old. If the right medicine is given the cure takes only two or three months, and if not, as many years. These sores are moistened itchy skin sores which spread with great rapidity. The Burmese prescription for an ointment to cure scabies includes: sulphur, KYAUK KHA, HSE DAN and copper sulphate. Also THANAT KHA root and KYAUK KHA are mixed together on a KYAUK PYIN stone slab to make a cream for application. The person affected has to bathe often. The medicine which really effected the cure, however, was M & B 693 (Mayer and Baker sulpha pills.) These cost U Myaing 8 annas for a dozen, and only 9 were necessary to cure the child. Before she was cured, her condition was so bad, and her sores so extensive that people were reluctant to carry the baby. They had to carry it swaddled in many clothes.

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Ringworm: PWAY. U Myaing had ringworm once when he was eighteen years old. This happened in Pantanaw, and it took him just three days to cure it. The ringworm whorls were so extensive that U Myaing did not dare to go out and mix with other people. In treatment, U Myaing used a western lotion of which the only distinguishing mark that he remembers is that it was of a "Two snake brand". He followed the directions on the label, bathing the whorls with soap and applying the lotion with a feather. The bottle held about four ounces and cost him Rs. 1/4.

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MWAY KYUT MAR (Hair-coming-off-sore). U Myaing had this affliction once in Pantanaw for a period of 15 days. When a hair falls out the skin in that place reddens and pus accumulates on the leg. The Burmese treatment consists of smearing the affected part with ashes and water mixed together.

Sore eyes: KYET SI MAR (eye sore). Sore eyes have been had by everyone in the family at one time or another. In the last four of five years, each member of the family has been afflicted about once a year. The eye becomes red and inflamed and watery. Tamarind bark is made into a cream and applied. Tamarind leaves are pounded with salt and placed and bandaged on the forehead. The cost of treatment is negligible, since the cure involves the use of about only one anna's worth of salt and the tamarind is obtained free.

Disorders of the Nose: Cough and Cold. (H NA HT (cold-catch) nasa NGA (NAGA) HSO (Mucous Flowing-cough)): All the members of the family get these disorders periodically, that is, about once or twice a year each. Treatment is by smearing balm (Tiger balm or others)

●753 757 in the nose and by using it as an inhalant also. A bottle of balm costs between Rs. 1/4 or Rs. 1/8.

Sore in the Nose: _____. The youngest child had a sore in her nose during the month of October 1950. This was through falling on her nose. Pus accumulated, and the nose became inflamed. It lasted for two weeks and was cured through the application of nose drops given to the family by a medical student.

Toothache: THWA KAIK (tooth ache): U Myaing had a toothache once in his life when he was 33 years of age. This was due to a decayed tooth. He suffered off and on for a period of over two years, and obtained relief only when it became sufficiently weak for him to pull it out. U Myaing did not go to the dentist to have the tooth extracted, and therefore there was no cost. This is the only case of toothache in the family, and even Daw Aw Zar has a complete set of sound teeth.

Stomach-Ache: BAIK NAE (stomach pain): U Myaing informs us that all the members of the family have had stomach ache some time in their lives. This he attributed to "wind" in the stomach. No treatment was taken other than the eating of digestive salts or KET NAA (sodium chloride and crushed bark.)

Piles; DU LAE, LEIK GAUNG (Young man disorder - tortoise head (rectum)): U Myaing has had piles since he was thirty years of age. He still suffers from it, but it does not trouble him much. He has undergone no treatment to cure it, as, he says, "All men have this. It is only a matter of size."

[158] Fits: YET. U Myaing tells us that his youngest daughter is subject to fits. To be exact, she has had them twice in her life. once when about a year old, and once about 5 months ago - at the age of three years. This comes on when the child falls into an incontrollable rage, forgets to breathe, and her face becomes blue. In this condition, the child has to be quickly massaged, till it resumes breathing. The period of affliction is short and there is no cost of treatment.

Cuts and Wounds. All the members of the family have had cuts or wounds at some time or the other. On such occasions Burmese practioners come and recite certain incantations over the wound, with the ostensible object of making itheal. For sword cuts, onions and sessamum oil are applied externally. This heals the wound quickly. If the leg is pierced by an iron nail, salt is pressed into the wound. At the age of thirty-two, U Myaing cut his toe with a DAH and inflicted a severe wound on himself. He cured it with onion and sessamum oil. Ma Khin Saw was severely burnt in the leg by hot water when one year old. Betel leaves, sugar and Ngan Pyar Ye (fish paste water) were first applied to the burn, and later on crushed THE BUNT leaves mixed in water. There was no swelling at all. Daw Aw Zar, when at Kyaungon developed a huge boil on the leg through having to walk in grass without any slippers on. She had to suffer for two months from this. Treatment consisted in bathing the boil with Ngan-Ye antiseptic liquid, and application of crushed KAZUN and gourd leaves mixed in water. The hospital also gave external medicines, but U Myaing does not know what medicine it was. It was healed after 2 months of treatment.

U Myaing was bitten twice by dogs. In such cases, treatment is by taking a silver THWE-CHA (tinture of iodine) rubbing charcoal onto its surface, and then pressing it seven times onto the wound while the person who is bitten holds his breath. There is a stanza which is usually recited on such occasions, but U Myaing does not happen to know it. When U Myaing himself was bitten, other people came and did the same service for him, and neither did they recite any stanza. However, his wound did not even fester.

There is also a stanza which is used to staunch the flow of blood. U Myaing believes in the efficacy of this stanza because

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he has seen it work before his very eyes. The flow of blood lessens and stops even while the stanza is being recited.

Mastitis: _____): Ma Aye Myaing had mastitis on the right breast three months ago at the refugee camp. She felt feverish and had pain all over. On the third day, an English lady, probably a welfare worker, gave her fomentation for three days but it had no effect. On the next day, when an Indian doctor on volunteer service came to the camp, she consulted him. After careful examination he gave her a black ointment to apply to the affected area. She didnot know what ointment it was, but Ma Khin Hmway conjectures that it was Ethyl belladona. In addition to the ointment, he also gave her some white pills. These had to be taken orally twice at a time, three times a day for a period of ten days. After ten days of this combined treatment, Ma Aye Myaing's mastitis was completely cured.

Influenza: TOKE KWAY (crouched position). Ma Aye Myaing tells us that she has had two attacks of influenza in her life time. The first was two years ago, and the second occured last year during the month of TAZAUNG-MON.

_____ ANAR PA HSOT (Sore heart). U Myaing once had an attack of Anar-pa-hsot when he was 35 years of age. This happened in Pantanaw, and was of 15 days duration. In this affliction, a swelling arises, red in colour, which rapidly accumulates pus. When this pustule bursts, new pustules rise at the base of the old swelling. If no medicines are taken, then the sore begins to spread but if treated with the right medidine the sore heals after the first pustule. The Burmese treatment for this disorder is as follows: Dried Hpan-Ga fruit is ground together with the mud from the mud-wasp's burrow, and placed on the sore. This stops the progress of infection within 5 days and effects the cure within another four or five days. The Hpan-Ga fruit costs about two or three annas, and that is about the total expenditure needed. However, if one does not know the cure, and has to consult a practioner, he will charge any amount between Rs. 10/- and Rs. 15/-. [435]

_____ HNYIN. Hnyin is a skin disease which brings out unsightly white patches on the skin. If not treated properly these tend to spread rapidly all over the body. The white patches are irritable and itchy, and very contagious. U Myaing has Hnyin patches on his body at present and has had them for the last three years. No medicines have been taken, because he regards it as a minor affliction.

The data on medicine and health was collected in the company and with the assistance of a medical student Ko Mya Tu who is at present studying in the Final Year M.B.B.S. class in the Rangoon University Medical College, preparatory to taking his final examinations. Ko Mya Tu proved of great help in interrogation and interpretation of data collected, and in diagnosing the nature of the various disorders from such symptoms and treatments as were remembered by the members of U Myaing's family. This technique elicited the information that there has been no case of Venereal Disease, Mental Disorder, Elephantiasis, Night-Blindness, Goiter, Plague, Mumps, Enteric, Beri-beri, Hernia, Cholera, Consumption and Disorders of the Ear in U Myaing's family. [124]

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Menopause: MEE YAT THWAY SOME (Woman Disorder-Blood End). Daw Aw Zar reached her climacteric at the age of 50. She did not suffer from menopause symtoms, as she had taken the following preventative measures: she ha eaten boiled duck eggs three at a time, and very frequently. Kyauk-Hpayon fruit jam was eaten all the time (since 25 ticals of jam can be offered on the altar and can then be eaten to last for 10 days. Phalaung-taung-hmwe root is thinly sliced, mixed with 25 ticals of palm jaggery, 6 pice worth of the 5 kinds of Hsa-mon seeds, and some salt, brewed together and taken. Also, each about two fingers small, were boiled and eaten with rice. Daw Aw Zar ate all these things until the age of 60.

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Smallpox: (Preventatives). The Burmese preventative measure for smallpox consists in rubbing the whole body in horse sweat and drinking mare's milk. The liver of the python is mixed with water and taken internally. Python flesh is also eaten and python skin is burnt and the ash mixed with jaggery (palm sugar) and made into pills to be taken orally. This is quite effective, and even if smallpox does come on later, it only does so in a mild form, as in the case of two of U Myaing's children who had only about 15 pustules each. U Myaing applied the preventatives. He tells us that practioners can shift the location of pustules. A pustule about to appear on the eyes of a child can be shifted elsewhere by using the tongue of the mother.

Medical injections-Vaccination and Cholera. Back in Pantanaw the English vaccinator came around only once in about three years, and consequently the children have been vaccinated only once in their lives. This, however is a service which is rendered free of charge. The youngest child has been vaccinated once here. The same remarks hold true for cholera injections also, except that every one in the family including the adults, have had only one inoculation each in their whole lives.

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Cleanliness. For bathing, U Myaing's family uses the hydrant in the camp twice a day. The soap which is used for washing clothes is also used on the body. In Pantanaw the river was used twice a day, and they had special soap for the body. In the camp clothes are washed every day because of their small number. In one month, the family uses up thirty cakes of soap each worth 2 annas, for bathing and washing. Teeth are cared for by cleaning them every morning with either salt or charcoal. This is true both of Pantanaw and refugee camp. It involves no special cost. In Pantanaw, the water used was water from the stream. This water was very clear, but it was also filtered before being used. In the refugee camp here the water is very clear and is used as it comes from the hydrant

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Warts: KATO. The cure for warts is to kill the mother wart by prodding it with some sharp instrument or pinching it away slowly.

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An important factor in the health of the family has been the supernatural. Daw Aw Zar was completely serious in informing us that the reason she was in good health at 72 years of age was that she had been good in a previous existence. This idea is apparently tied to the concept of merit acquisition in which the deeds of the present existence add to or subtract from the well being of the future existence. U Myaing states it in this manner:

"The good in this life is because of the meritorious acts in the previous existence."

Basic Burmese Concepts of Health and Sickness.

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The Burmese regard health as the best of all earthly blessings. Although Buddha referred to the living body as a decaying corpse, which it was folly to feed, he recognised the necessity for bodily health in order to carry out the all-important mental activities connected with the Buddhist religion. It is then essential for each person to be as physically and mentally sound as he is able. The forces governing health and sickness are both supernatural and natural each with its own set of medical specialists. The specialists are called for only when the case is far advanced there being an extensive lore of home precautions and curative practices. In general, disorders caused by nats and ghosts (supernatural) or magic are recognised by their sudden, catastrophic or otherwise unusual nature, and are both instigated and cured by magical means. The natural disorders are caused by weaknesses in the constitution of the patient, foreign bodies, dangerous foods and such-like means, and are cured through knowledge of medical principles. The germ concept of disease is completely lacking, although when foreign matter is seen, as mosquito larvae in water, it is frequently regarded as unhealthy. The western idea of omnipresent harmful bacteria is regarded as fantastic in being contrary to observation - "our ancestors have lived for countless generations in these surroundings which you regard as dangerous", they will say. There are some 80 different kinds of PO MYOSIBA or harmful ingredients that can infect the body. These range from undesirable ingredients in food to mystical influences that rise in the teeth to cause tooth-ache. The cleanliness of the Burmese, as seen in their several daily baths and emphasis on clean clothes, is not out of regard for "hygenic" reasons, but rather for social reasons. One must look his best in public so as not to give offense, to the eye or nose. The sick person is never washed since cold water would have the effect of driving the fever-heat inward to a fatal degree. The date for resumption of bathing for the convalescent is carefully considered; mistakes can result in relapse and death. Cool breezes must be avoided by the sick person for similar reasons. The house doors closed during the day invariably mean sickness within.

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753 The concept of KARMA (fate) is important only in determining
777 the general well-being of the individual, as seen in Daw Aw Zar's
262 belief that her general good health was due to a morally-lived previous existence. "It is like a shadow". Some specific situations like being born blind is attributed to one's KARMA - in this case the person had been a notorious fighter of cocks in the previous existence; cocks being frequently blinded in the fights.

Each person is regarded as subject to some special disorder or weakness such as being especially subject to colds or headaches, or stomach troubles. Collectively these are referred to as "age-group" weaknesses. (MIYAT - girls' weakness; DULAH - boys' weaknesses.) But this is due to childhood illnesses and neglect of early troubles rather than KARMA. Persons with the weaknesses noted above avoid cucumbers (a "cold" vegetable), or hot foods including liquor (these cause greater heat to rise to the head), or green or raw vegetables (hard to digest). The choice of the correct diet to suit one's particular condition is important.

751 Bodily exercise is a prime consideration for health. Calli-
526 sthenics or sports for this purpose are unknown or unrecognized and by
461 " healthful exercise " is meant everyday work activities. Regular
757 daily motion is regarded as necessary for health, and a purgative is
514 taken regularly once a month. The idea is to " clean out disease ". Purgatives are taken first in most sicknesses. This is followed by drinking preparations in hot water to induce perspiration along with woolen blankets. The colour of the urine is checked "daily" since a too yellow colour indicates an unhealthy condition. If so - one must drink additional quantities of water and coconut water. "Urine takes the place of perspiration in cold weather". Over-working and lack of sleep also tend to lead to unhealthiness. The ideal
[93] sleep period is from 8 p.m. to 6 a.m. with a nap thrown in from 12 to 2 after "breakfast".

158 Too much worrying SAY.TAUNG.LO.NOJEH (mind-beating-because-
753 body-crush) leads to sickness. This is a common problem for mothers who worry about their children's futures. It results in THEHJEH-PIZEH (small black bitter (gall)-disorder) where the gall fluid is

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recognized as over-stimulated by anxieties. "Don't talk my gall into disorder" is a common reaction to calamity tales.

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The weather is important is maintaining health. Changeable weather as during the late part of the Monsoon season is generally unhealthy and gives rise to pulmonary disorders. One should provide head protection (through covering or shade from umbrella) from the sun's rays - which cause headaches by melting the brain. Colds come from getting wet in the rain resulting from the lack of sufficient bodily heat. MIEH HNGNE (earth-vapour) which rises as a steam in the early morning or after sudden rains is unhealthful in causing sore eyes and other inflamations. The"steam of the body" healthfully goes out in ordinary bathing and adds to one's comfort. Heat is a key factor in health and sickness being readily discerned as causes of local or general infection. The additional concept of "like producing like" helps explain the above beliefs.

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The odor of AH HNYAW (fried-food) is especially dangerous to babies and persons in a weakened condition. When frying, which will create extensive fumes, is to be undertaken the cook must give warning to the neighbourhood so that susceptible ones can be protected. Such persons take refuge behind the thick, cloth mosquito nets. Many heated arguments take place in our servants' quarters when the Indian fried food fumes carry over to the Burmese apartments. It is observed that this danger applies peculiarly to the Burmese - Chinese are also exempt since they are seen to cook with babies strapped on their backs.

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Parts of the body are cared for with special ingredients. The eyes are cleaned with pure water or coconut water. Oil is frequently dropped into the ears through a feather quill. The mouth and teeth are cleaned with salt. Bitter foods keep keep the stomach fit.

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Babies up to 1 year are fed on mother's milk or cow's milk. After one, rice chewed by the mother "to make it digestible" is added with some dried fish. After two, the child can chew its own rice, have a little meat, but no hot condiments. After five the child eats the same foods as the adults but is not allowed sour foods as this will "loosen the weight". After 16 or 17, this restriction is

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Nats' powers for good include protecting the village from dacoit attacks but does not extend to modern warfare. When the Japanese armies were slicing up through Tenasserim in 1941, the elders of Maung Maung Than's village prayed for nat protection against the invaders. The nats replied "Dear Villagers we ourselves are wearing raised longyis in this crisis (ready to run)." This is a Rangoon town joke told among the sophisticated collegiates at the University. Not so well defined, but still sensed is a growing distrust of the powers of nats to combat modern evils.

The nats can best be visualized as supernatural despots each with his province (the home, village, sea, babies) and each exacting tribute of periodic or constant attention in the form of flowers or food, red and white cloth strips, and an altar which may have the image of the nat carved in wood (or moulded in modern plasticene). Banyan trees with their multiple, snake-like trunks, are the most common places of abode. When disaster in the form of sickness or other ill fortune strikes, the nats are appeased with offerings immediately. The SAY SAYA will frequently check with the family of his patient to make sure this has been done. In Rangoon and elsewhere, business men whose fortunes have been good are the main supporters of the nat festivals which are given for the entertainment of all the nats once a year in October, for a seven day period. NAT KADAW (nat-wives) are the mediums who contact the nats by becoming possessed by them at this festival and other special occasions (for a single nat) throughout the year. These are married women or more rarely homosexuals who dance, answer questions and give opinions when possessed.

Punishment for offense against the nats is first shown by accidents or sudden illnesses like paralysis meted out to the offender. If the offender continues the village as a whole will gradually be afflicted. For example, when a drunkard offends the nats with blasphemous language evil falls on the entire village. Villagers led by the elders and a prominent NAT-KADAW go in a body to the major banyan tree shrine to have an understanding with the offended nats. Offerings are given and attention of the nats called to the woes of

776 of the villagers. The head-nat, the guardian of the village, replies
●753 with accusations that "the whole village has forgotten me", boasts of
688 his powers to punish and is finally molified. In Rangoon there are
672 professional nat-givers who parade the streets with a cart bearing the
782 image of "the conquerer of the salty waters" (special nat of entrepre-
[463] neurs). For a few annas he will make offerings to the nat and relcive the busy townspeople of this task.

776 The arrangement is a mutual one where the people enjoy freedom
782 from oppressions in return for certain concessions. This phenomenon closely parallels the traditional relationship between the rulers and the ruled in Burma. In a real sense the nat concept serves the function of allowing the Burmese a sense of control over catastrophic forces which do not fall into any other system (as secular, political,
[177] personal relationships, cosmology.). It is this system of controls that the western scientific system most immediately competes with. The administrative and entrepreneur class of Burmese especially in Rangoon say they "Do not believe" in nats. But it is usual for most individuals no matter what their western background to apply to nats in cases of ill fortune "just in case".

775 THAYEH (Ghosts) generally are a group of supernatural spirits closely related to nats in their origins but with a different set of properties. These are "recently" deceased individuals whose crimes and sins while on earth or manner of death condemn them to an eternity of wandering and mischief-making. Actually, each person becomes a ghost at death but is ordinarily released from earth at the moment of the interment of the corpse for judgement in heaven. Those who die of
[761] "raw death" become ghosts. These include: death in childbirth, by wild animals (especially tigers), instant deaths by dahs as in warfare, or by hanging. In Maung Maung Than's village a prominent ghost is U Ne Gyi (Mr. Blacky) a very sinful fellow who lived 50 or 60 years ago in the village. His complexion is quite black and horribly distorted. He inhabits a banyan tree and specializes in causing infant illness. Offerings of rice at the tree pacifies him. Ghosts are forces for evil only - evil of the more irritating and less important kind.
751 Older people wear red and white coloured strings about their necks as a protection against ghost evils. It is very common to wear a LET-PWET

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787 826 Omens are read from the position of mongoloid spots on the newborn baby's body. They are said to represent marks put on in a previous existence and their presence proves the child was then a human being. A blue spot on the foot presages a life of travel. Any marks leading from the right shoulder to the left hip, the line that the royal riband takes, indicate a royal future; today, however, with no royalty in Burmese society, such marks merely forecast a "great" future for the child.

775 826 A child is constantly watched from the time of birth for signs of whose reincarnation it represents. This is a constant topic in the family conversations.

Any disfigurement in a newborn child is regarded as a carry-over of the parents' store of demerit, as well as that of the child, from previous existences. It is regarded with a sense of shame and sorrow.

845 Although multiple births are neither preferred nor desired, they are not looked upon with any marked anxiety nor are there any supernatural means employed to prevent them.

766 In the event of a stillborn baby, the corpse is given special treatment. It is kept in a case, clothed and powdered, and a tray of food is set in front of it every day. It is considered auspicious to care for a stillborn child in this manner: the spirits will guide the parents in their dreams toward the attainment of material prosperity.

751 854 [825] [753] For the normal baby who survives, a number of things are done by Burmese parents to protect it from malevolent influences. Before it is a month old, a tiger bone is ground on a stone, together with a little water, and mixed with honey. This is fed to the child to ward off a mysterious infant illness associated with the tiger. A connection is believed to exist between the tiger and convulsions; some parents place a tiger skin under the mattress of the baby's bed to guard against such illness. A knife placed under the baby's mattress is said to protect against illness in general.

To insure good health and well-being for the child, a white thread over which certain *mantras* have been recited may be given by a Buddhist monk and tied around the baby's wrists. Should a baby be admired by people for its growth, the thread may be left on to neutralize the harm that is believed to result from such expressions.

[278] When the child's umbilical cord has dried and fallen off, it is kept and used as a medicine for any illness that befalls the child. A little of it is ground up and mixed with water for such purposes.

000 A very close connection is believed to exist between mother and child during